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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 002641

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDED CONFIDENTIAL TO PARA 9)

SENSITIVE  
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STATE FOR AF/FO AND AF/RSA

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AU](#)  
SUBJECT: USAU: AFRICAN UNION CHAIRPERSON DISCUSSES  
U.S.-AFRICA RELATIONS

REF: ADDIS ABABA 002622

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1.(SBU) Summary: USAU Ambassador Michael Battle engaged in a fruitful discussion with AU Chairperson Jean Ping when he presented his credentials on November 2. Ping emphasized the importance of the U.S. to Africa, and the positive effect that "the new Obama philosophy" has had on America,s image. He expressed his desire for the outside world to recognize Africa for the progress it is making on shared values such as democracy and good governance, and noted the substantial opportunities that the continent offers. Ping also acknowledged that the AU spends over 50 percent of its resources on conflicts, and urged the U.S. to "think about us." End Summary.

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THE U.S. AND AFRICA  
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2.(SBU) U.S. Ambassador to the African Union (AU) Michael Battle presented his credentials to the AU Chairperson, Jean Ping, on November 2 and engaged in an hour-long discussion of Africa and its relationship with the U.S. According to Ping, whether you love the U.S. or hate it, it is "the leading country in the world." Given that African countries are the poorest, most vulnerable and least developed in the world, the African continent cannot ignore the U.S. As evidence of this, Ping noted that he himself will go to the U.S. twice this year, once for the UN General Assembly which took place in September, and a second time in April 2010 for meetings in Washington.

3.(SBU) Ping spoke about what he referred to as "the new Obama philosophy," saying it is turning the U.S. into a country to be loved (though perhaps also still feared, given its size). He noted that he went to Cairo 10 days after the President,s speech there in June 2009, and was struck by how much Obama impressed people. "The Muslim world has one billion people and they,re trying to admire and love America. This is something we haven,t seen in the past," Ping remarked. He also observed that the U.S. has changed its relationship with Russia and suggested lending the Russians a hand, letting them make the choice of whether to take it.

4.(SBU) Turning to Africa,s relationship with the rest of the world, Ping explained that there are five regions in Africa plus a sixth ) the diaspora. Comprised of 152

million Africans living outside the continent, the African diaspora is a critical group for the remittances it provides.

Cape Verde, for example, moved from least developed to moderately developed exclusively through remittances. Ping said he is proud that President Obama himself is part of the sixth region, as "it helps us to be closer to America and strengthen relations."

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GIVE AFRICA SOME CREDIT  
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5.(SBU) In discussing Africa, Ping expressed his desire for the outside world to recognize the continent's positives. While the AU has four pillars ) Peace and Security, Development, Capacity Building, and Shared Values ) it is the last pillar (which includes democracy, human rights, good governance and justice) that the AU wants the world to appreciate. Ping lamented the fact that people view Africa in a negative light, pointing out that there are not just coups and killings, but also successes such as the elections in Ghana and Cape Verde. If you looked at Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s, he said, you saw dictators where now you see widespread democracy, albeit with some problems. Ping would like to make Africa a continent free of fear and tyranny, conflict, human rights violations, rape and killing, as well as a place free of needs, where people can find jobs, send their children to school, cure their family, and eat properly. He feels that Africa needs encouragement for the progress it is making and the goals it hopes to achieve.

6.(SBU) Highlighting the unfairness of the fact that Africa does not get proper credit for the progress it is making, Ping complained that no one says anything about the failure of countries in the Middle East to hold elections, while they readily point out Africa's shortcomings. The same is the case with Asia. Ping stated that democracy is a process that

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takes time and Africa is moving in the right direction. "We're going to have our set-backs," he said, but, "All of us will do everything possible to put countries on the right path. It won't take centuries."

7.(SBU) Not only is Africa making progress in promoting shared values, but it offers significant opportunity as well. With one billion inhabitants in Africa, to grow to 1.4 billion by 2020, "it's not only China and India who offer opportunities." In addition, the AU plans to construct a Pan-African University with five centers of excellence in each of the five regions of Africa. The hope is to avoid brain drain by training professionals on the continent and keeping them there. As an example of the severity of brain drain in Africa, Ping noted that there are more Beninois doctors in Paris than in Benin. He would like to collaborate with American institutions, particularly in the areas of capacity building, training, and exchanges.

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HELP WITH CONFLICTS  
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8.(SBU) At the same time that Ping touted the progress that Africa has made, he acknowledged that he spends over 50 percent of his time and resources on governance and security problems. When he arrived at the AU, he had wanted to deal with development, but was soon trapped by conflict. Turning to Guinea, he affirmed that the events of September 28 are unacceptable and that AU member states will do everything they can to remove junta-leader Dadis Camara. Ping also assured the Ambassador that Madagascar would be brought into constitutional order, adding "I can assure you that none of these countries where there've been coups will succeed." (See ref for Ping's comments on Niger). He urged the U.S. to assist Africa with its problems, including drug-trafficking.

9.(C) While Ping gave assurances that AU member states play a fundamental role in managing regional conflicts, he concedes that certain factors hinder the AU's ability to deal squarely with governance issues. When the AU suspended Mauritania after a coup, for example, the Arab League, of which Mauritania is also a member, did not. This weakened the AU's impact. You can bring everyone in the caravan, Ping said, "but the caravan moves at the speed of the slowest camel." He mentioned Libya specifically as being a slowing force.

10.(SBU) Comment: Ping is sincere in his desire to strengthen U.S.-Africa relations, and will be a supportive and valuable resource as the U.S. Mission to the African Union expands its areas of engagement with the AU. End Comment.

AMBASSADOR MICHAEL A. BATTLE  
MUSHINGI